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ABSTRACT

The material describes Louisiana's Down's Syndrome Project designed to prepare young children with Down's syndrome for transition to school and for placement in the least restrictive environment. Program location, budgeting, and funding information are discussed along with four major objectives. An organizational chart illustrates local and state collaboration. Staff development activities are briefly reviewed, and parent program efforts (evening meetings, a parent support group, counseling, and information and referral services) are described. Home-based and center-based services to children are summarized along with information on curriculum. The project's community awareness program includes a volunteer component and a practicum/internship program. (CL)

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DOWN'S SYNDROME PROJECT

Bulletin 1719

, 1984

Dissemination Manual*

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PHILOSOPHY

Recent studies concerning the education of children with Down's Syndrome and advances in the area of early childhood education have created an awareness of the benefits an intensive early educational program can offer the child with Down's Syndrome.

Traditionally, placement in local educational programs for children with Down's Syndrome has occurred between the ages of three and five, depending on local and State regulations. Often educational placements for children with Down's Syndrome have been in separate facilities, such as special schools, throughout their education. The child's first and foremost teachers are his parents and family. As the child becomes older, his main educational experiences are provided in a school program. It is the goal of the Down's Syndrome Project to provide the most appropriate, individualized education possible. and to provide a smooth transition from home to school for the young child with Down's Syndrome. Another goal is to provide a background which will enable the children to achieve educational placements in less restrictive environments, such as regular school campuses.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The developmental potential for the Down's Syndrome population has generally been judged by many to have been underestimated.

Because Down's Syndrome can be identified almost at birth and because research has shown that effective intervention of developmental delays is best initiated in the very young child, parents and educators in this community felt that a program was needed to realize the potential for the growth and development of children having Down's Syndrome.

The Down's Syndrome Center initiated services in 1979. The Louisiana State Legislature designated the initial and continuing funding to provide services for children with Down's Syndrome. The Down's Syndrome Project is operated by the Louisiana Department of Education, in cooperation with the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board. The program provides a free, appropriate education to children with Down's Syndrome, from birth through five years of age.

For more information about the Down's Syndrome Project or to request technical assistance please contact Susan Batson at 3365 Dalrymple Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802. The telephone number is 504/342-1257.

LOCATION OF PROGRAM

The Down's Syndrome Project is located on the L.S.U. campus at 3365 Dalrymple Drive in Baton Rouge. The program is open from 8:00 to 4:30 five days a week.

The program serves East Baton Rouge Parish and several surrounding parishes.

* Denotes parishes DSP presently serving

x Denotes parishes DSP has served

BUDGET/FINANCIAL

A major portion of the funding for the Down's Syndrome Project is acquired annually through the Louisiana Legislature and the State Department of Education.

Nine positions are provided by East Baton Rouge Parish School Board through Minimum Foundation Program funding. Minimum Foundation funding is the formula under which the State funds local educational agencies based on pupil/teacher ratios. Excess salary costs above MFP and summer employment costs are provided through an interagency contractual agreement between the Louisiana Department of Education and East Baton Rouge Parish School Board. The amount of this contract varies in accordance with employees' qualifications and experience. The 1983-84 State appropriation is $184,107.00. A breakdown of the funds is shown on the following page.

BUDGET

FY 83-84 LINE ITEM IN LEGISLATURE

PERSONNEL:

Director	
Social Worker	
Secretary	
Housekeeper	
SUBTOTAL:	76,030.00
TRAVEL	6,760.00
CONSULTANTS, CONTRACTED SERVICES	15,200.00
LEASES, FOOD SERVICE, EQUIPMENT, ETC.	49,568.00
RELATED BENEFITS, INDIRECT COSTS	36,549.00
TOTAL	184,107.00

Other State funds for East Baton Rouge Parish 76,000.00

OBJECTIVES OF DOWN'S SYNDROME PROJECT

1983-84

1. To provide an educationa and related service program to Down's Syndrome children and their families referred to the project in accordance with Federal, State, and local regulations to include direct educational program, speech pathology services, adapted physical education services, social work services, occupational and physical therapy, and other services as specified on the IEP.

2. To provide technical assistance in areas related to Down's Syndrome and early childhood education to State and local agencies and any other interested groups.

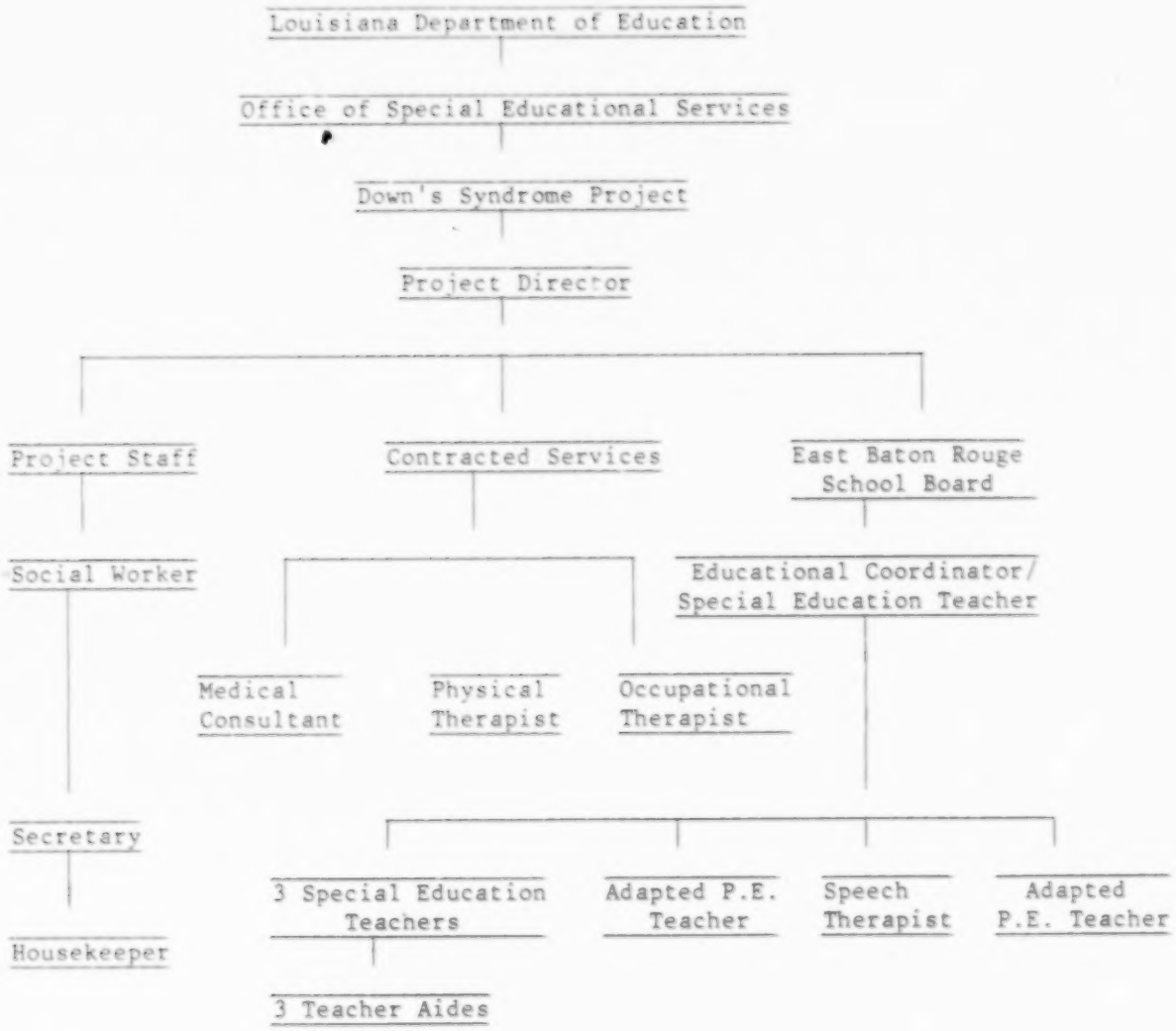
3. To develop a needs assessment for research in areas relative to Down's Syndrome.

4. To involve parents in their child's education through support, information, counseling, and participation in the implementation of individual education plan.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

The Down's Syndrome Project is a cooperative program of the Louisiana Department of Education and East Baton Rouge Parish School Board. Administration of the project is provided by the Louisiana Department of Education. The organizational chart represents the personnel of the Down's Syndrome Project and their respective agencies.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



CHARACTERISTICS OF STAFF

POSITION	SEX	RACE	DEGREE	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
Director	F	W	MA	10
Social Worker	F	W	MSW	9
Educ. Coordinator	F	W	MA+30	8
Adapted P.E. Teacher	F	W	M.Ed.	15
Teacher-Center	F	W	BA	10
Teacher-Center	F	W	M.Ed.	5
Teacher-H/B	F	W	MS	7
Teacher-Aide	F	B	H.S.	5
Teacher-Aide	F	B	H.S.	8
Teacher-Aide	F	B	H.S.	1
Secretary	F	W	H.S.	4
Housekeeper	F	B	H.S.	1
Speech Therapist	F	W	MA+30	1

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the 1982-83 fiscal year, the Down's Syndrome Project staff attended various training meetings relating to programs for young handicapped children. These meetings were attended by all staff or by appropriate staff members in their particular fields. Some of the topics addressed at these training meetings were genetic clinic, CPR training and instructor training, working with parents, administration of programs for handicapped children, medical concerns, assessment and curricula, medications commonly taken by children and the side effects of the medication, feeding techniques (O.T.), Denver training, and First Aid.

Included in this number are regularly scheduled inservice meetings held about once every nine weeks and attended by all staff members.

The staff of the Down's Syndrome Project has attended various conferences this year, such as Down's Syndrome Congress and American Association on Mental Deficiency. These conferences were attended by appropriate staff members, and information is disseminated at scheduled inservice meetings or staff meetings.

PARENT PROGRAM

The Parent Program addresses two primary identified needs -- information/education and support/counseling. The following activities are designed to help meet these needs.

1. Evening Parent Meetings are held about eight times a year.

Topics included during FY 82-83:

Behavior Management Approaches and Techniques

Open House

Community Resources

Christmas Pageant

Medical Implications of Down's Syndrome

Developing a Parent Organization

Easter Egg Hunt

Genetic Implications of Down's Syndrome

The number of parents, visitors, and children varies but the mean number in attendance has been 31 adults and six children, not including the staff.

2. The Parent Support Group is specifically designed for parents of the younger children. It has been offered twice on a time-limited basis of 16 sessions, 1.5 hours each. Both series alternated didactic teaching with open discussion. Currently an open-ended parent support group session is being conducted every other week for 1.5 hours each. The emphasis this time is open discussion with occasional didactic sessions

on topics of special interest. Before each series was begun, an assessment was conducted to ascertain the particular needs and interests of the parents who would be invited to participate. The change in focus reflects the needs of the current group of new parents. The mean number of parents attending the first series was seven, the second series was four, and the current series is five.

3. Parent Participation in the classroom is designed to encourage sharing and understanding between parent and teacher and to facilitate carry-over to home of skills acquired in school. Before and after each activity, the parent and teacher confer.

4. Counseling is provided to parents on an as-needed basis. Common presenting problems include such concerns as initial response to a Down's Syndrome child, setting and examining expectations concerning Down's Syndrome, dealing with health complications and their consequences, and working through issues related to subsequent pregnancies, and marital stress. Other family members may also be included.

5. Information and Referral services are provided on an ongoing basis. Information is provided related to Down's Syndrome, medical implications, educational implications, parents' rights, available resources such as parent organizations and reading materials, and available services. Direct referrals to services are made when appropriate, and parents are assisted in accessing needed services.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The educational program is divided into two levels: a home-based level and a center-based level. The IEP process. which involves the parents as well as the child's teachers in developing the child's educational program, will determine the most appropriate placement for each child enrolled in the program.

The first level of participation in the program is home-based. The children enrolled in the home-based program are seen by qualified personnel both at their home and in the center at least once a week. The speech pathologist, adapted physical education teacher, social worker, and consulting medical staff are available for consultation or direct services as the need arises, and as specified on the child's individual education program.

The second level of participation in the program is center-based. This level consists of an all-day classroom program. Some of the daily activities which the children participate in are morning circle greeting time, concept development time, adapted physical education, and language development activities.

Achieving independence in the area of self-care skills, such as feeding and dressing, is an important part of the educational program. Close attention is given to special dietary needs of the children. Social/emotional development is also addressed during the daily schedule of activities. The transition from home-based setting to center-based class may be a traumatic one. The teachers make every effort to ease the transition by scheduling abbreviated visits with the children to their new classrooms prior to making a permanent change in placement.

Children participate in regular or adapted physical education either individually or in small groups. Speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other related services are available for children who qualify for these services through an individual evaluation process and the IEP.

Voluntary parent participation in the classroom is encouraged, as it facilitates consistency in the development of skills by the children. Regular parent/teacher conferences are scheduled to discuss the child's progress in achieving educational objectives and to familiarize the parents with new class activities.

The entire staff meets three times each week to discuss children enrolled in all levels of the program. Each staff member shares information about the child's progress as well as techniques she is using with the child to ensure continuity in the child's total educational program. Individual concerns are discussed and new techniques are explored for working most effectively with the child.

CURRICULUM

The curricular approach used at the Down's Syndrome Project is a developmental, eclectic one. Assessments and activities are pulled from a variety of appropriate sources. Stimulation and skill learning activities for each individual child revolve around the normal sequence of development in the areas of motor skills, communication, social-emotional skills, cognitive skills, and the self-care skill areas of feeding, dressing, and toileting. Research and experience have shown that most children with Down's Syndrome follow the same developmental sequences in these areas as normal children; however the rate of skill acquisition is usually slower. The child's rate of progression through a specific skill sequence may vary depending upon such individual factors as the child's medical status and physical limitations. For this reason, when a child is placed into either a home-based or center-based class at the project, the teacher administers a developmental assessment test which pinpoints the child's current level of functioning and also identifies his strengths and weaknesses. Following this assessment, the educational staff and the parents design an instructional program to meet the child's needs, incorporating developmental activities appropriate for the child.

The educational approach for a child enrolled in the home-based program relies heavily on parental involvement. During visits with the child and his parent(s), the teacher demonstrates and works with the parent

and child on learning activities which are developmentally appropriate for the child. The parent is encouraged to incorporate stimulation activities into the child's daily routine. This will facilitate the development and generalization of skills in the child's most natural setting, his home.

Regularly scheduled conferences encourage exchange between parents and teachers and provide the parents with stimulation activities, useful information, and suggestions for use at home.

Daily attendance in the school-based program allows for group activities as well as individual learning opportunities for the children. Emphasis is placed on the developmental areas, as well as peer group interactions, readiness skills, and an increased independence in self-care skills and communication skills. Even though much of the child's time during a regular school day is spent in small groups, the teacher can gear specific tasks to each child within the group, thus addressing the learning level of each child.

Some assessment and curriculum tools used at the Down's Syndrome Project are Louisiana Curriculum for Infants with Handicaps, Sequenced Inventory of Communication Development, Early Intervention Developmental Profile, and the Learning Accomplishment Profile.

STUDENT VARIABLES

As of April 20, 1983

Female	Male
20	20

Negro	White	Other
9	30	1

Home-based	School-based	Referral and Information
14	16	10

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The community awareness program is designed to inform and educate the professional and lay communities concerning Down's Syndrome, educational and treatment approaches, and what the Down's Syndrome Project does. The following activities are geared toward this end.

1. The Volunteer Program has been in formal operation since October 1982. There have been six volunteers who have amassed a total of 88 hours at the center. They have assisted in the classroom, provided babysitting for parents in the Parent Support Group, and have performed typing services. In addition, a local Lioness Club has sponsored special occasion parties for children in the project and has donated equipment to the center. A local VFW club has also donated educational toys and equipment for use by the center. The L.S.U. Student Services Council has donated time, made and repaired equipment, and arranged for the donation of a piano to the center.

2. The Practicum/Internship Program is open to undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in area universities as well as to certain high school programs. Since the inception of the Down's Syndrome Project, the following numbers of students have participated:

Social Work graduate interns -- 4 at 464 hours each

Special Education graduate practicum students -- 3 at 100 hours each

Speech Pathology graduate practicum students -- 50 hours each

Adapted Physical Education students -- 12 at 32 hours

Undergraduate psychology students -- 2 at 30 hours each

High school seniors -- 2 at 30 hours each

In each instance, practicum and internship students were supervised by Down's Syndrome Project staff duly certified in their profession and in supervision.

The Down's Syndrome Project has also been an observation site for students enrolled in such programs as nursing, special education, home economics, and social work. In some instances, the project staff has made presentations to university classes, professional conferences, community organizations, and agencies.

3. The Down's Syndrome Project staff conducts workshops/presentations to local school systems who request technical assistance. Workshop topics have included Down's Syndrome, genetics, medical and educational considerations, scheduling, behavior management, and educational approaches. Similar presentations have been made to professionals at State conferences, such as AAMD and annual Louisiana Special Education Conference.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Down's Syndrome Project has served 54 Down's Syndrome children and their families from 10 parishes through direct educational programs.

As of January 1983, 29 children are directly involved in the educational program and an additional 12 children and their families are accessing the support and information services.

Since 1979, 17 Down's Syndrome children have moved from the project to other educational programs.

Ten children moved to Noncategorical Preschool Handicapped classes, some on regular campuses and others on special school campuses. Two children moved out of state and were enrolled in developemental centers. One child continued in a home-based class setting. Two children moved, at the age of six, to self-contained classes on regular school campuses. Information regarding class settings for the remainder is not known.